

THE CPSU UH

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On March 16, 1973, a Master Memorandum of understanding between the University of Hawaii and the National Park Service was signed which established the Cooperative National Park Resources Studies Unit at the University of Hawaii. The Unit is a jointly sponsored research unit whose function is to encourage and conduct biological research in Hawai'i's National Parks.

The advantage for the National Park Service is the availability of qualified research personnel, well-versed in Hawaiian natural history, who can study the resources in Hawai'i's National Parks efficiently and effectively. The objective is to obtain information that will allow each Park to formulate and update its Resource Management Plan.

For the University the advantages are the encouragement and support of biological research by faculty and students in the Parks. In this case students, normally encouraged to get as much supervised field experience as possible, are provided financial and logistic support which is generally the primary limitation on field work. The faculty also benefits by the continued support of their professional development. Thus the University benefits by the support and consequent upgrading of the graduate program in areas requiring extensive field work.

Each National Park has a Resources Management Plan. This Plan is formulated from the Park Service experience within each Park. Within each Resource Management Plan, the various proposals identify where further information is needed. Each proposal requiring new action is then ranked in terms of its priority and an estimate made of the money and time needed to fulfill the proposal. The priority assigned to any proposal depends on a number of criteria, not least among which is the availability of funds and personnel.

Each Park's resource management program is then evaluated at the State and Regional levels. The top priority items requiring research are then discussed with regard to their urgency, feasibility, and the availability of funds.

A Resource Management Plan is not a static objective for a particular Park. It is updated and modified as necessary, that is, it changes with the requirements of the resource managers. However, there is a certain stability in the overall proposal, and programs once instituted are followed through to their expected conclusion.

The CPSU UH Coordinating Committee is involved in this process to a limited extent in that we review management plans and proposals. At times, the CPSU UH Coordinating Committee (consisting of three entomologists, three botanists, one ornithologist and the research biologist from Hawaii Volcanoes National Park) will identify resource management problems which it feels should be attended to; for example, the management of weeds. However, the role of the unit is to conduct research on subjects identified by the parks, and not to urge the parks to take care of specific problems. Individuals and groups should address their concerns directly to the park managers.

Once a research program has reached the stage that it is of sufficient priority and funds are available, the CPSU UH is invited to find someone to investigate the problem. An initial estimate is made of the cost of the program, the availability of sufficient qualified people, and adequate facilities and equipment. The Principal Investigator, who may be a faculty member or a graduate student, is asked to write a research proposal with a detailed budget. The research proposal is evaluated within the Unit and Graduate Division of the University before it is passed on to the National Park concerned, the State Director, and the Chief Scientist of the Western Region. At the Park, the proposal is checked to ensure that their resource management problem is being addressed and that it will provide the type of information that they need. At the State and Regional Offices the proposal is again assessed as meeting resource management needs but legal, budgetary and other criteria are also considered. I cannot overemphasize the fact that all research conducted by the Unit has as its primary objective the optimal management of some resource within the National Parks. At this point, if all requirements have been satisfied, a contract is drawn up between the University and National Park Service which identifies the research proposal, and by implication the research program, which is to be sponsored. Once all the appropriate signatures have been obtained the CPSU UH administers the research program on behalf of the principal investigator; that is the Unit provides secretarial assistance, takes care of administration requirements (payroll, travel, supplies, etc.) and also ensures that the program is running smoothly and reports are received when needed. The Unit tries to relieve the researcher of all hassles so that the research program operates at its maximum efficiency.

Most research programs are long-term and require several years for completion, yet the CPSU UH operates on an annually renewable contract. This apparent paradox is not a problem in reality. Assuming that the University and the National Park Service are satisfied with the overall program it is

understood that once a research program has been contracted it will be continued through its conclusion on a funds available basis. No program would be prematurely terminated unless the researcher has failed to comply with the contract.

I must stress the contractual nature of any research program conducted via the auspices of CPSU UH. There is a reporting schedule, every six months. These reports are an opportunity to briefly describe the highlights of progress to date and to identify problems experienced or anticipated. The report should normally be only two or three paragraphs long. However, as each segment of a research program is completed a technical report is required. This requirement is to fulfill the objectives of the research program; that is to give the Park resources managers the information they need as rapidly as possible. Later publication in an appropriate journal is also encouraged.

Apart from the formal program, CPSU UH does have certain limited funds available to sponsor or assist researchers to work in Hawai'i's National Parks. This assistance may be requested by one of the Parks which needs information, or broaden the coverage of an ongoing independent research program. The National Park Service is anxious to encourage responsible research within the parks as much as possible.

Though the CPSU UH was organized in 1973, the program has taken some time to get into full operation. All programs have a certain latent period during which results are not forthcoming. Dr. Doty, Botany Dept., U.H. nursed the Unit through its formative years before handing it over to me last fall. I feel that now all major problems, misunderstandings, etc., have been resolved and that information is becoming available rapidly and on schedule. The money available to support research is limited and there are many Parks competing for the available funds. I think it is true to say that Hawai'i's National Parks have done remarkably well in attracting the attention of the Regional Office to support the research needed for their Resource Management Plans. I look forward to many years of fruitful cooperation between the University of Hawaii and the National Park Service during which we can develop a research program to provide the information for a resource management program that will allow our unique flora and fauna to flourish.